

Remarks/Arguments

Please reconsider the application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

Disposition of Claims

Claims 1-4, 6-11 and 15-18 are rejected. Claims 5 and 12-14 are objected to but have been deemed to include allowable subject matter. Claims 1 and 9 have been amended. Claims 4, 5, 12, 17 and 18 have been canceled. Claims 1-3, 6-11, and 13-16 remain pending.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102

Claims 1-3, 7, 9-11 and 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Publication 1002/0120728A1 to Braatz et al. Independent claims 1 and 9 have been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of dependent claims 5 and 12, respectively. Accordingly, applicant submits that amended independent claims 1 and 9, and all claims dependent therefrom, are no longer anticipated and requests that this rejection be withdrawn.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 4, 6, 8 and 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 as being unpatentable over Braatz et al. Because independent claims 1 and 9 have been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of dependent claims 5 and 12, respectively, applicant submits that dependent claims 4, 6, 8 and 16 are no longer obvious over Braatz and requests that this rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 17-18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 as being unpatentable over Braatz et al. and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,936,315 to Lais. Because claims 17 and 18 have been canceled, this rejection is moot.

Conclusion

The claims have been shown to be allowable over the prior art. Applicant believes that this paper is responsive to each and every ground of rejection cited by the Examiner in the

Action dated July 16, 2003, and respectfully requests favorable action in this application. The examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned, applicant's attorney of record, to facilitate advancement of the present application.

Please apply any charges not covered, or any credits, to Deposit Account 04-0932 (Reference Number 11621/53970). The applicant herewith petitions the Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks to extend the time for reply to the Office action dated July 16, 2003 for 2 month(s). Please charge deposit account number 04-0932 (Reference Number 11621/53970 in the amount of \$210 to cover the cost of the extension.. Any deficiency or overpayment should be charged or credited to the above numbered deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: 12-15-03

By: 
Kevin J. Carroll, Reg. No. 36,384

DEVINE, MILLIMET & BRANCH, P.A.
111 Amherst Street
P.O. Box 719
Manchester, NH 03105

Telephone: (603) 669-1000
Facsimile: (603) 669-8547